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Some North American Botanists.

VIII. JOHN LEONARD RIDDELL.

There is little on record concerning the personal history of Professor Riddell. He early became a resident of the West, where, with the exception of an acquaintance with Sullivant, and possibly with Short, he was in almost complete isolation from the botanists of the time. He subsequently took up his residence in the South, where his botanical acquaintances, and the opportunities for reference and consultation seem to have been even less than in the West. The South and West of fifty years ago presented little opportunity for study aside from their comparatively unexplored floras.

John Leonard Riddell was born in Leyden, Massachusetts, February 20, 1807. He died in New Orleans October 7, 1865. When less than a year old he was taken by his parents to Preston, Chenango county, New York, where his father obtained a farm. During portions of the years 1826 and 1827 he attended Oxford Academy, and afterwards the Rensselaer School at Troy, where he obtained the degrees of A. B., and A. M. For several years from 1830 he gave lectures on various scientific topics in many places in the United States and Canada. These lectures attracted some attention, and in 1835 he received the appointment of Adjunct Professor of Chemistry and Lecturer on Botany in the Cincinnati Medical College. This institution subsequently gave him the degree of M. D. While at Cincinnati he published a "Synopsis of the Flora of the Western States," a 12mo pamphlet of 116 pages, enumerating the plants known to occur in the territory which "extends from the Alleghany mountains in West Virginia to the Platte river in Missouri Territory, and from the southern boundary line of Tennessee to the latitude of Detroit." This catalogue was in great part a compilation. The Kentucky plants were given almost entirely upon the authority of Dr. Short, those about St. Louis upon the authority of Dr. Lewis C.

Beck, who had contributed considerably to the knowledge of the plants of that vicinity through *Silliman's Journal*, while the collections of Nuttall were relied upon for the Missouri Territory. It enumerates over 1,800 species, and gives notes on habits of growth and localities. This catalogue was the first contribution of much importance devoted entirely to the Western flora. The following extract from the preface will explain the design of the work: "It has for several years been the author's design to publish a flora of the Western States when he shall have accumulated a sufficiency of materials; and he takes this opportunity of soliciting information from those who may choose to favor him with their correspondence, and of proposing an interchange of botanical specimens with all who may wish to form collections. The following catalogue, though necessarily incomplete, will probably aid in effecting the desired object, by exhibiting its present state of advancement, thereby enabling observers located in different sections of the assumed territory the more easily to make additions to it." The catalogue contains descriptions of thirteen new species of flowering plants, and two or three Charas. Of these, two stand in our manuals, *Solidago Ohioensis* and *Trilium nivale*. It also contains a description of *Solidago Riddellii*, so named by Dr. Joseph C. Frank, "a most zealous and accomplished botanist," author of "Rastadts Flora," and who was deputed by some German society to travel in this country and make botanical collections. Dr. Frank became intimate with Riddell, and spent some time with him in Cincinnati before he set out on his botanical journeys. During his stay in that city he interested himself in grasses and sedges, a work commemorated in *Eragrostis Frankii*. In 1835 Dr. Frank fell a victim to yellow fever in New Orleans.

In 1836 Dr. Riddell published a "Supplementary Catalogue of Ohio Plants," which contains descriptions of seven new species, of which four still stand,—*Linum sulcatum*, *Helianthus occidentalis*, *Scutellaria saxatilis* and *Stachys cordata*. That year he was elected to the chair of Chemistry in the Medical College of Louisiana at New Orleans, an institution which subsequently became the Medical Department of the University of Louisiana. This chair he occupied until his death. With his move to the South he seems to have given up his Western flora. He at once began to collect materials for a flora of the Southern States, however, a work which seems to have been constantly postponed on account of a multiplicity of other duties. His herbarium, upon which this work was to have been founded, is said to have been very large and excellently arranged. In 1851 Dr. Riddell con-

tributed to the Smithsonian Institution a manuscript on "The Plants of Louisiana." In this contribution he was aided by Prof. W. M. Carpenter and by Dr. Josiah Hale, who contributed the *Cypreaceæ* and *Gramineæ*. The Smithsonian did not publish the contribution, and Riddell made an abridgement of it under the title of "Catalogus Floræ Ludovicianæ" for the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, which published it in 1852. The manuscript catalogue contained descriptions of new species by Prof. Carpenter, and twenty-one species and several varieties by Riddell. The manuscript or the subsequently printed catalogue seem not to have been consulted by Dr. Chapman in his Southern Flora, although *Dicliptera Halei*, one of Riddell's new species, is inserted.

While residing in New Orleans, Dr. Riddell was for some years connected with the government mint. He published in 1845 a "Monograph of the Dollar," a work containing fac simile impressions of between five and six hundred kinds of United States and Mexican dollars, both genuine and counterfeit. During the latter part of his life he did much work with the compound microscope, investigating extensively the lower forms of life, and inventing the binocular microscope. As early as 1836 he published in Cincinnati a paper on "Miasm and Contagion," in which he advocated that contagious diseases are caused by "organized and living corpuscles of various kinds." This contribution became popular, and was republished in Boston. He also contributed considerably to the scientific journals on matters relating to chemistry and other topics.

Dr. Riddell is said to have been a universal favorite with all who knew him. His students regarded him with adoration. He was a clear, concise lecturer, and a logical thinker. His business abilities were extraordinarily good, and he amassed a handsome property. His name is indelibly associated with botany through the genus *Riddellia*, a name which Nuttall gave to a western Composite. The original species, *R. tagetina*, has been supplemented more recently by *R. Cooperi* and *R. arachnoidea*, both added by Dr. Gray.—L. H. BAILEY, JR.

Notes on Some Ustilagineæ of the United States.

The study of the *Ustilagineæ* is beset with difficulties, for not only do the species themselves present comparatively few salient points of distinction, but the generic characters as estimated by recent writers depend largely upon the mode of germination of